

EGYPT'S GOLDEN EMPIRE

Egypt Lesson Plan 6: A Day in the Life of an Egyptian

Introduction:

The focus of this lesson is to teach students about the daily lives of ancient Egyptians from every social class. Life varied dramatically for people based upon where they were in the social order, and students will examine how people from all walks of life lived. Students will use creative means to present what they have learned about the lives of Egyptians from all social classes.

Subject Areas:

World History, Sociology, Social Studies, Music, Theatre, and Communication Arts, students

Grade Level: 6-12

Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

1. Participate in class discussion activities related to social class and class systems.
2. Use research skills to work in small groups to complete a scavenger hunt activity about ancient Egyptian social classes/occupations.
3. Work in small groups to complete creative projects illustrating the daily life of a person from one of the social classes/occupations they have studied.
4. Present their creative projects to the class.
5. Complete a written response activity related to social classes and class systems.

Relevant National Standards:

McRel Compendium of K-12 Standards Addressed:

World History

Standard 3: Understands the major characteristics of civilization and the development of civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley.

Historical Understanding

Standard 2: Understands the historical perspective.

Music

Standard 4: Composes and arranges music within specified guidelines.

Standard 7: Understands the relationship between music, history, and culture.

EGYPT'S GOLDEN EMPIRE

Theatre

Standard 1: Demonstrates competency in writing scripts.

Standard 2: Uses acting skills.

Standard 3: Designs and produces informal and formal productions.

Standard 4: Directs scenes and productions.

Language Arts

Writing

Standard 2: Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing.

Standard 3: Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions.

Standard 4: Gathers and uses information for research purposes.

Reading

Standard 5: Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process.

Standard 7: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts.

Listening and Speaking

Standard 8: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes.

Working with Others

Standard 1: Contributes to the overall effort of a group.

Standard 4: Displays effective interpersonal communication skills.

Estimated Time:

This should take three 90-minute class periods or five to six 50-minute class periods plus additional time for extension activities.

Materials Needed:

- If you wish to purchase a copy of the program, visit the PBS Shop for teachers [<http://teacher.shop.pbs.org/product/index.jsp?productId=1406375>] (optional).
- A Day in the Life Scavenger Hunt [[Download PDF here \(48k\)](#)], part of this lesson plan.
- A Day in the Life Presentation Guidelines [[Download PDF here \(80k\)](#)], part of this lesson plan.
- Audio and video recording equipment (optional).
- Access to costumes and props or materials for creating these items (optional).
- Assorted art supplies (optional).

EGYPT'S GOLDEN EMPIRE

Procedures:

1. Ask students to define the term “social class”. Take three to five minutes to talk about what social class is, factors that determine a person’s social class, the ability of people to move from one class to another, and students’ general opinions about societies sorting people by social class.
2. End the discussion by explaining that social classes have been part of society since ancient times, and in Egypt, there were very specific classes of people. Tell students that they may be surprised to discover some of the similarities between the ancient Egyptian class system and the way people are divided into classes today.
3. Using the [Egyptian Society](http://www.pbs.org/empires/egypt/newkingdom/society.html) [<http://www.pbs.org/empires/egypt/newkingdom/society.html>] and the [A Day in the Life](http://www.pbs.org/empires/egypt/special/lifeas/index.html) [<http://www.pbs.org/empires/egypt/special/lifeas/index.html>] features on the Egypt’s Golden Empire Web site, explore the daily lives of the ancient Egyptians. Allow students to work in small groups of two to four. Ask them to read about the various social classes as well as the jobs held by everyday people. Use this information to complete the [A Day in the Life Scavenger Hunt](#) [[Download PDF here \(48k\)](#)] in this lesson plan.
1. After all students have completed the scavenger hunt, discuss the questions so students can compare the information they found with what other groups learned. Facilitate a short discussion about the various social classes and lifestyles using questions such as:
 - If you could be a member of any social class except the pharaoh, who would you choose to be and why?
 - What were the advantages and disadvantages of life as a priest? soldier? craftsman? woman?
5. Using what they have learned from their research, have groups work together to complete a creative project illustrating the day in the life of a person from one of the social classes/occupations they have learned about. Distribute the [A Day in the Life Presentation Guidelines](#) [[Download PDF here \(80k\)](#)] in this lesson plan to each student and review the requirements for the presentation.
6. Provide students with one to two class periods to formulate their ideas and plan the project. Remind students that practicing their presentation is critical to the group’s success.
7. After projects have been completed, each group should present their project according to the established guidelines.

EGYPT'S GOLDEN EMPIRE

8. When all projects have been completed and students have a greater understanding of the lifestyles enjoyed by each group of people, have them write a two to three paragraph response to one of the questions below. Encourage students to support their opinions with specific factual information learned from project completion and project presentations.
- If you could be anyone except the pharaoh, who would you choose to be and why? Be sure to explain the advantages and disadvantages a person with this social status and job would have had in ancient Egypt.

Or

- Compare the way the ancient Egyptians divided people into classes with the way Americans are divided by class. What are the similarities between the two? What are the differences?

Assessment Suggestions:

1. Students could receive participation grades for class discussion activities.
2. Students could receive completion grades for finishing the A Day in the Life Scavenger Hunt.
3. A scoring guide, peer evaluation forms, and/or self evaluation forms could be used for assigning grades on the A Day in the Life presentations.
4. Students could receive letter or percentage grades for completion of the written response activity.

Extension Activities:

1. Have students work together to plan an "Egyptian Day" where they can teach other classes or younger students about life in ancient Egypt. They might eat typical foods, dress in typical Egyptian clothing, play common games, write using hieroglyphs, and so on. Have students create stations or activities where others can experience things that would have been a common part of everyday life in ancient Egypt.
2. Study the social class system in the U.S. in greater detail. Have students use census statistics and other related data to chart things such as income, educational levels, career statistics and home ownership. Have students present their research data in the form of graphs and charts that indicate the percentages of the population falling into various social classes based on these economic factors.

EGYPT'S GOLDEN EMPIRE

Related Resources:

The Bergen County Technical Schools site has Web pages on Ancient Egyptian Social Life [http://www.bergen.org/AAST/Projects/Egypt/egyptian_social.html]. These provide information about professions, homes, clothing, jewelry, food, and drink.

The British Museum's Ancient Egypt site has a section on Egyptian Life [<http://www.ancientegypt.co.uk/life/>], which compares the life of a farmer and a nobleman. It also gives directions for playing the popular game, Senet.

The University College London site, Digital Egypt, has a section on Social Classes in Ancient Egypt [<http://www.digitalegypt.ucl.ac.uk/social/>]. This discusses the various social classes and has links to related topics.